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STATE FOR EUR A/S FRIED AND EUR/SNEC -- AMB MANN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/10/2026
TAGS: PREL PGOV OSCE AR AJ TU
SUBJECT: TURKEY/ARMENIA: NEW TURKISH PROPOSAL?

REF: WILSON-MANN-BRYZA E-MAIL OF FEB 15

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

Summary

¶1. (C) MFA Caucasus DDG Karslioglu told us March 8 that Turkey would present a new "paper" to Armenia on March 10, but would not elaborate on its content or method of delivery. He stated "significant progress" must be made on both Nagorno-Karabakh as well as on bilateral issues (genocide and alleged territorial claims) before Turkey would consider opening its border with Armenia. AKP Foreign Relations Deputy Chair Disli confirmed some political party contacts with Armenians. End Summary.

New Turkish Initiative?

¶2. (C) Karslioglu said that we would soon be hearing "surprising" news on Armenia. Turkey will present Armenia March 10 with a "point paper." Although Karslioglu declined to provide details, he suggested the paper would be passed to Armenian officials in Ankara and would contain ideas on how Turkey and Armenia could restart a dialogue, effectively frozen for over six months. He explained his unwillingness to describe the points to us with the excuse that the GOT had not yet finalized the paper.

¶3. (C) Karslioglu said no recent high-level diplomatic contacts had taken place. However, the two sides now carry out routine exchanges through their ambassadors in Tbilisi, whereas they had formerly done so in Moscow. There are also bilateral contacts at the Black Sea Economic Council (BSEC). Karslioglu said he has informal contacts through whom he has helped facilitate short-fuse, humanitarian shipments, for example.

¶4. (C) He added that low-level exchanges with Armenia continue, including indirect trade through Georgia and direct flights between Yerevan and Istanbul. Buses are now able to travel between Athens and Yerevan, passing through Georgia. Numerous Armenian businessmen travel to and from Turkey, obtaining 30-day visas easily at points of entry. The "suitcase trade" is reportedly thriving. He described continuing cultural exchanges: a meeting of Turkish and Armenian Rotarians will be held in Ankara in April. The Rotarians are also sponsoring the travel of a Turkish dance

troupe to Armenia this spring.

Caution on Opening Border

15. (C) Karslioglu opined that significant progress on a Nagorno-Karabakh settlement would be a necessary, but not sufficient condition for Turkey to consider opening its border with Armenia. Domestic political pressures dictate that Turkey and Armenia must also make progress on bilateral issues, such as genocide claims and border recognition, before the border can be opened.

Some Parliaetary Contacts

16. (C) Meanwhile, AKP Foreign Relations chief Saban Disli confirmed reports we had heard of some unofficial contacts between Turkey and Armenia (ref). According to Disli, former AKP Deputy Chairman Mercan had recently talked to Armenian diaspora representatives in Istanbul. AKP Vice Chair Reha Denemec and AKP U.S. - Turkey Friendship Caucus leader (and Erdogan advisor) Egemen Bagis will travel to the U.S. late March and hope to meet with Armenian diaspora representatives in New York.

17. (C) Disli said FM Gul is encouraging more party contacts with Armenia but PM Erdogan is taking a more cautious approach. He suggested there was some disagreement between the Erdogan government and the bureaucracy over how far to take these contacts without risking embarrassment should they prove fruitless. He noted that AKP MPs from areas along the Turkey-Armenia border are pressing for an opening of the border. Disli cautioned that progress on these issues would take time but suggested contacts -- at the party level and hence "deniable" by the government -- would continue.

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